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HORNOR # THOUGHTS IN VERSE

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S. S. HORNOR

OF PHILADELPHIA

THOUGHTS IN VERSE

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1864

THOUGHTS

IN VERSE

BY

S. S. HORNOR

OF PHILADELPHIA.

—

Each finding like a friend,
Something to blame and something to commend.

POPE.

—

SECOND EDITION.

—

PARIS,

PRINTED BY E. BRIÈRE,
257, RUE SAINT-HONORÉ.

—

1864

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ANNIE.

As shines the diamond among stones of meaner worth,
Drawing, by contrast, yet more regal beauties forth;
Or gold thrice heated and ten times thrice refined;
Truthful and just she stands, the noblest of her kind.
Amid the selfish throng who ape a higher part,
A gem that brighter glows as we approach the heart,
With faith abiding and with steadfast sense of right,
She views the giddy world with all its vain delight,
Unmoved by fashion's false and senseless fear,
Yet ne'er from grief withholds the sympathetic tear.

PROLOGUE.

Between the hours of toil and slumber,
  My labour done and loved ones near,
My thoughts have sometimes run in number,
  A few of which are dotted here.

THOUGHTS

IN VERSE

THE INFANT, THE MAID, THE MOTHER.

1847. Published.

A rose bud smiled beneath a sunny bower,
And brighter grew as day succeeded day,
Until it bloomed a sweet and blushing flower,
And Zephyrs came to steal its sweets away,
And bring it nectar lest it should decay.

One morn was found within its fragrant cup
A crystal dew-drop, just distilled from Heaven,
A sunbeam passing took the dew-drop up,
The rose then drooped, to earth its leaves were given,
And e'er 'twas noon the stalk was tempest riv'n.

Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him.
—Ps. VIII. 4.

1848. Published.

Stern are Thy mandates, Father of the just,
And at Thy bidding nature's wheels are still;
Earth unto Earth returns, and dust with dust
Doth mingle at the promptings of Thy will.

Thy hallowed presence shines on every land,
Thy works omniscient point to Thee and Thine,
In least, in greatest, all, is seen Thy hand,
And on Thy bosom worlds on worlds recline.

The planets rolling onwards one by one,
As round the dial moves the hand of time,
Each shining star, illumined by its sun,
Reflects the fabric of Thy works sublime.

When tempests wild disturb the tranquil deep,
And lightnings fiercely flash from zone to zone,
Then at Thy voice the slumbering billows leap,
And thunders echo from their walls of stone.

The bird, the beast, and living creatures all,
The atoms, too, proclaim infinity ;
Yet none are lost, nor can the sp rrow fall,
Unless the mandate emanate from Thee.

Then what am I, and why do I deserve
To witness and enjoy this grand display ?
And what is man, that Thou should'st him preserve,
That he may live when all these pass away ?

1846

Never judge a man's learning by the size of his library.

WAIT.

The man who succeeds is thought wise ;
  A fool, if his efforts should miss ;
The shadow the substance o'erlies,
  And pomp is mistaken for bliss.

Purest honour its glory will hide,
  And truth will her beauties conceal,
Modest merit will patient abide
  Until time shall her virtues reveal.

Though wisdom may fail for a time,
  And truthfulness battle in vain,
And modesty shudder at crime,
  Yet the germ ever lives in the grain.

That seed which soon blossoms and thrives,
  If the soil and the season should suit,
And ripens when summer arrives,
  And yieldeth its generous fruit.

THE STORM KING.

Far I hear his chariot winding,
As the storm king leaves his home,
Rumbling, rushing, crashing, grinding,
Shaking earth and rocking dome.

Fierce as though the heavens were bending,
Rolls the thunder off his hand,
Snapping, cracking, hissing, rending,
Lightnings flash athwart the land.

O'er his brow, in festoons curling,
Hangs the hail like crystal spar,
Off his locks the snow drifts hurling
Sow the frozen mists afar.

The winds unloosed wild chorus keeping,
Loud their icy clarions play,
Past the storm king madly sweeping,
On the tempest rides away.

THERE'S NO SUCH WORD AS FAIL [1].

Heed not this cold world's taunting jeer,
  But in thy might arise,
It ofttimes proves misfortunes here
  Are blessings in disguise.
If sordid friends should us disclaim,
  Our lot we'll not bewail,
Nor will we own there's such a name
  Or such a word as fail.

1. These verses were written in 1843, some time before the publication of the pretty lines of Mrs. Neal, of Philadelphia, on the same subject. The author adds this note to disclaim any intention of foolishly imitating or dishonestly appropriating the works of others.

I've seen the oak beneath the storm
  Bow down upon the shore,
I've seen it raise its stately form
  And flourish as before;
If storms assail our earthly bark
  We'll brace the shattered sail,
Though friends be few, and prospects dark,
  There's no such word as fail.

I've seen the ship lie tempest tost
  Upon the troubled main,
That vessel which all thought was lost
  Is sailing free again.
When driven on before the blast,
  And enemies assail,
We'll nail our motto to the mast,
  "There's no such word as fail."

Full many a pilgrim by the way
  A look hath homeward cast,
Sorrowing again hath turned away
  But reached the bourne at last.
When kindred, too, grow cold and shy
  While listening to our tale,
We'll say press on, the goal is nigh,
  There's no such word as fail.

'Tis when the fusing masses meet
  The assayer's furnace glows,
However high we raise the heat
  Still purer metal flows.
If Providence should thus award,
  Our efforts to prevail,
We then will shout with one accord
  There's no such word as fail.

As God is just, then stand erect
  Beneath his outstretched arm,
His work in season he'll perfect,
  And shield us from all harm.
So let us trust in Him whose voice
  Is heard in every gale,
And ever in our prayers rejoice
  There's no such word as fail.

BOYS IN MY OLD PLAY GROUND.

'Tis threescore years, yet seems a day,
Since like these boys I used to play,
And even now I hear the ring
Of merry shouts that used to bring
The very echo from the wood,
And rouse the drowsy neighbourhood.
But since those days, how sad the change!
All faces here are new and strange.
Were I to cast a look behind,
I could not one old playmate find.

Though I deplore the days gone by,
These boys for years of manhood sigh,
So youth looks forth and age looks back,
Ever regretting what they lack
To fill the measure of their dreams,
And make of life all that it seems.

GRIEF AND JOY.

1847

There is a time when grief and sadness
  Our souls submissive silence teach,
Also a time when joy and gladness
  Deny the tongue the power of speech.

And thus it is when thou art near me,
  That language fails to ease the heart;
When thou art gone there's none to cheer me,
  Both pen and muse refuse their part.

TO ALEXANDER II.

ON THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS.

'Twas thy behest, great Czar, and sole decree
That made a score of fettered millions free!
Noble the act, but nobler still the mind
That did these galling, long-bound chains unbind.
In after years—when thou and they have passed,
Thy name, entwin'd with Freedom's flame, shall last.
But higher still the tribute *thou* hast won:—
When serf-born sire shall tell the free-born son
The monarch's name who thus their thraldom broke,
And in their hearts true liberty awoke,
These will re-gild thy fame on memory's scroll,
And spread its rays from north to southern pole.

DOING THE RHINE.

1859

This doing of the Rhine,
Is all very fine,
If the sun should chance to shine,
And you're furnished with good wine;
But should the cold winds blow,
With showers or with snow,
And you're driven down below,
Like cattle or like swine,
Then doing of the Rhine
Is not so very fine,
Looking at the ruins
Surrounded by the vine.

Women and their dogs,
Chattering like frogs,
Peasants with their clogs,
Grunting like hogs,
On steamers small and slow,
Dragging to and fro
Coal barges in a row;
Men guiding the engine,
By bellowing down below;
The piston at each stroke,
Throwing clouds of smoke
Enough to make one choke,
Not at all a pleasant joke,
While doing of the Rhine,
Looking at the ruins,
Surrounded by the vine.

Though poets all may sing
What a glorious thing,
In Autumn or in Spring,

To travel on the Rhine,
With steam rushing through
Each crevice and each flue,
Blinding half the crew;
Hot enough to scald,
Or turn a monkey bald;
Where houses all are called
The Hotel Bellevue.
But here is Cologne,
Let us go ashore,
And leave the Rhine alone,
Nor go there any more.
Doing of the Rhine
Which is not so very fine,
Looking at the ruins
Surrounded by the vine.

THE RICH FOOL.

1849

I staked my all in search of wealth,
  On hoarding gold my soul was bent,
I lost my self-respect and health,
  And found with riches discontent.

TO MY NEPHEW

DR. C. W. HORNOR,

ON HIS COMMENCEMENT OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE.

1851

If thou would'st win a reputation,
Seek thou first a spotless name ;
Then with honest emulation
Force the gate that opes to fame.

When within her fair dominions,
Think ye not the battle won ;
Those who mount her golden pinions,
Find their labours scarce begun.

WHEN REASON LACKETH.

Mankind is blest with an immortal soul;
The brute has passions fierce beyond controul;
Yet man in vice descends more basely low
Than brute or beast were ever known to go.

THE ARTIST.

1847

With transport wild he scanned each glowing line,
As inspiration gleamed in every shade,
Until the picture truthful and divine,
The artist's name henceforth immortal made.

Thus to posterity he nobly gave
His years of labour and of hard-earned fame,
And in return received a pauper's grave,
The price the world has set upon a name.

And so in after ages man will bow
In willing homage to the giant mind,
Who goes neglected and impoverished now,
Although a benefactor of mankind.

---

* * * * *

Stately in bearing, worthy of her birth,
Graceful as Pallas, and without her pride,
All modest and unconscious of her worth,
And lovely as the earthly deified.

THE WEARIED SOJOURNER.

A SOLILOQUY.

Adieu! adieu! a long and last adieu!
To this false world, this wearied life of mine,
With sorrows many and with pleasures few,
As onward rolled the hurrying wheel of time.

Farewell to youth, that fading priceless gem,
With all its hopes and all its pleasures gone,
As falls the fruit from off the ripened stem,
So man declines, as age comes stealing on.

Then welcome, welcome Death! Thrice welcome thou!
Since thou alone can'st set my spirit free;
The cup of life is nearly drained: and now
Nought but the dregs remain on earth for me.

ON A GRAVE-STONE.

Ye who are worldly tarry not here,
The righteous are sleeping, and Angels are near!

DE BACCA GWINE TO SEED.

All de bacca [1] gwine to seed,
  Wid de [2] brier and de thorn,
De nutt grass and de weed,
  Dey am [3] killing ob de corn.
For young Massa gone to war,
  Young Missus she am cryin,
Old Massa count de star,
  And old Missus she am sighin.

When de moon am shinin clear,
  Now de banjo it am dumb,
All de music dat we hear
  Am de music ob de drum.

1. Tobacco. 2. The. 3. Are.

For young Massa gone to war,
  Young Missus she am cryin,
Old Massa count de star,
  And old Missus she am sighin.

When de buckwheat am in blossom,
  And de cotton in de bole,
No more we hunt de possum,
  Nor de wild bee in de hole.
For young Massa gone to war,
  Young Missus she am cryin,
Old Massa count de star,
  And old Missus she am sighin.

And when de corn we riddle,
  All de niggers dar [1] am sad,
And no more we play de fiddle,
  For to make de old folks glad.

1. There.

Cos young Massa killed in war,
  Young Missus she am cryin,
Old Massa count de star,
  And old Missus she am dyin.

THE ROSE AND THE LILY.

1845

A rose bud to a tulip said
  I'd ne'er a lily be,
It blooms to-day, to-morrow dies,
  And thus it is with thee.

The tulip said such is the way
  Which modesty adorns,
Better to dwell with her a day
  Than centuries with thorns.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT

ON THE DEATH OF AN ONLY CHILD.

1848

Oh! Father teach thy servant how
  Thy chastening rod to bear,
For life a void is seeming now,
  And all is dark despair.

I miss my darling infant's call,
  Now hushed for evermore,
A solemn gloom pervades the hall,
  Where all was bliss before.

Her prattling voice still haunts my rest,
  In dreams I see her smile,
I wake to clasp her to my breast,
  But memory mocks the while.

Ere breaks the spell, I fancy half
  I hear her footstep near,
I fancy, too, her merry laugh
  Now bursting on my ear.

When morn at length dispels the dream
  That fancy conjures up,
And bids me with the earliest gleam,
  To drain again the cup

Of sorrow, bitter as the weed,
  Whose fruits with gall compare,
Then on the dregs my senses feed
  In search of solace there.

And now to Thee again I turn,
  Oh! Father of the just,
A helpless, sorrowing, child to learn,
  In Thee alone to trust;

Whose grace is like the precious dew
  That fell on Zion's height,
And manna for the chosen few,
  The righteous and upright.

WHEN SHALL I FORGET THEE?

When the mountains sink to seas,
And the seas to mountains rise,
When the sun and moon shall freeze,
And the stars forsake the skies.

* * * * * * *

A WINTER'S NIGHT SCENE

IN AN AMERICAN FARM HOUSE 1.

1844

Fast under the table old Growler is sleeping,

And puss in the cupboard is watching for mice,

1. In many farm houses in North America it is still the custom, as it was formerly, as I am informed, in England, that the whole family of a well-to-do farmer—father, mother, sons, daughters, and the servants of the house and farm, would spend their evenings together in the commodious kitchen. And a happier little community, and healthier state of society, could with difficulty have been found than in a certain house I recollect; where the servants would willingly occupy themselves in knitting stockings for the whole establishment, after the ordinary labours of the day, while the master smoked his pipe, the old lady read over her daily chapter, and the younger members of the family occupied themselves, according to their various tastes, industriously and innocently.

While all out of doors the cold sleet is beating,
  And the old poplars groan 'neath their burthen of ice.
Around the bright fire the lasses are knitting,
  The boys in the corner are greasing their shoes,
While old Uncle Joe ponders chewing and spitting,
  And Aunt Sally Perkins sits conning the news.
The yeast in the pitcher is quietly brewing,
  Amy is making the dough for the bread,
The apples for pies are all simmering and stewing,
  And Jim, Jack, and Tom are gone off to their bed.
Jemima the buckwheat is merrily stirring
  For cakes in the morning for breakfast so hot,
And old sleepy Tom,—he sits nodding and purring,
  Winking and blinking at kettle and pot.
Cousin Sam in the cellar is drawing some cider,
  And Jenny is getting the apples and nuts,
While Sambo's sly grin becomes wider and wider
  As the old cellar door slowly opens and shuts.
Father stands at the door and is scanning the weather,
  It will make a sad work with the fences he fears,

And taking the season and all things together,
  There's been no such storm for these thirty odd years.
Granny thinks and declares that the house will blow
    down,
  That the ice and the wind sure the poplars will break
And as true as she lives and her name's Mary Brown,
  She can sensibly feel that the old chimneys shake.
And the Almanac also has given a hint,
  That there might be a storm in a fortnight or two.
Then *we'll* all be murthered, screams Biddy O'Flint,
  If the Almanac says so, it has to be true.

MY PHOTOGRAPH.

We're here to-day. To-morrow where?
When echo faintly answers where?
This fleeting shadow caught from air,
Perhaps may tell, I once was there.

THE SWORD AND THE FEATHER.

The sword in proud triumph went glittering past,
It marched to the war tramp, the trumpet's loud
blast,
It swept past a goose quill that lay by the way,
Caring but little what a feather might say.
The feather it spoke, but with tremulous tongue
At the first, until louder like thunder it rung,
O'er mountain and valley, and over the main,
Pursuing the sword and its murderous train.
It spoke of dark deeds, and of treacherous might
Of millions who 've perished for justice and right.

The sword, still disdaining the feather to heed,
Like the whirlwind rode on, on his iron-clad steed,
By blood-thirsty legions and tyranny led,
Through rivers of blood, and o'er mountains of dead.
The feather's sole weapon, the light of the mind,
Its only ambition, the rights of mankind,
Though often despairing was never dismayed,
And it palsied the hand that had wielded the blade.

ALL MEN ARE BORN EQUAL.

"Am I not a man and a brother."

The Palace and the Hovel
  Lie in proximity,
The Monarch and the Beggar
  Are all one family.

There's trouble in each household,
  Tho' high or low it be,
The lightning shivers both the top
  And bottom of the tree.

---

* * * * *

In magnanimity old Grip did all transcend
Next to himself he loved his dearest friend.

THE UNEDUCATED.

1857

Some stones are chosen for their worth,
  And some are wrought into the wall,
While some neglected lie on earth,
  But still the statue lives in all.

For where the treasure least is sought,
  Most precious gems are often found;
So Angels sometimes dwell where nought
  But wickedness and vice abound.

CHOOSE WELL.

1847

Some seek fame, some a name, some for gold contend;
Ask not wealth, crave but health, with virtue as your friend :
Envy not, and ape ye not, the lordling or his slave,
Life's but lent, time mispent is mortgaged to the grave.

A RETROSPECT.

How oft from school we stopped to play,
Or chase the thistle down away.
And hailed the coming holiday!
Or in the blossom of the pea,
We trapped the wasp and honey bee;
While some, more daring than the rest,
Would stay, to storm the hornet's nest,
Or mock the croaking of the frog,
And watch the turtle mount the log,—
Then, send them tumbling off their throne,
With well aimed stick or pebble stone.
As when we crossed the darkening wood

That on our passage homeward stood,
Where ghosts and goblins met at e'en,
And Jack o'Lantern oft was seen.
When each one moved with lighter tread,
And scarcely dared to turn his head,
Till safely past the farthest tree,
When one and all, with noisy glee,
Again would join the jubilee.
Though all this happened years ago,
The summer months still come and go.
The woods remain, the grizzly ghost
Still haunts the timid and the lost.
The pea still blooms, the thistle blows,
The bustling brook unceasing flows,
The frogs, the turtles, too, are there,
The bees, the hornets, everywhere.
The old grey oak still shades the spring,
As when we strode the creaking swing.
The school-house stands, and boys still play,
But my old school-mates, where are they?

Some have risen to high estate,
Some have met the pauper's fate.
Some have joined the battle fray,
But most, alas! have passed away.

THE PRESENT.

A SOLILOQUY.

These grey hairs falling one by one
Recall to mind what time hath done:
Of fallen hopes and in their place
How age comes stealing on apace;
Of trusted ones who false have proved,
Of loss of those we fondly loved;
How worldly pleasures end in pain,
And loss of peace in search of gain,
'Neath weight of years how mortals bend,
How all things earthly soon must end.

AUTUMN.

1846

The autumn is waning, bleak winter draws near,
The hoar frost is tinting the leaves with its blight,
Like the cold hand of Death with the pall and the bier,
Bringing sorrow and sadness o'er scenes of delight.

The cowslip and daffy long silent are sleeping,
The wild prairie flowers have sunk to their bed,
The aspen, the ivy, and willow stand weeping,
Over their comrades now withered and dead.

The hound and the hunter are far on the mountain,
The horn and the echo resound o'er the hill,
The wild deer and fawn have forsaken the fountain,
The song birds have long since deserted the rill.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath."

1849

All hasty words the feelings shock,
  And gentle speech the soul unmans,
So billows madly lash the rock,
  But gently kiss the yielding sands.

LET WELL ALONE.

1850

I threw by chance, and hit my mark,
  To prove myself a marksman true.
I shot a shadow in the dark,
  But found I'd pierced a mirror through.

I wrote a book that gave me fame,
  But not content must write once more,
The latter work disgraced my name
  And left me poorer than before.

I made a voyage, it brought me wealth,
  I thought to be a millionaire,
I risked again but lost my health,
  My fortune, too, and found despair.

I courted favour with the few,
  To gratify ambition's ends,
Ambition proved a failure, too;
  When fortune failed then failed my friends.

LINES WRITTEN

ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE DEATH OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

Who died in the United States' Capitol, at Washington,

FEBRUARY 17TH, 1848.

The day was lowering, the clock struck two,
  A breathless nation heard the knell,
That tolled the statesman's last adieu,
  And gave the world his long farewell.

No more shall awe-struck listeners stand,
  To hear his mighty mind unfold,
For Death has laid his mightier hand
  Upon that form now still and cold.

The burning truth fresh from the heart,
Which blazed like meteōrs in the skies,
Or, flashing like some fiery dart,
That round in sparkling fragments flies.

As when he raised his manly form,
Both Wise and Scilly [1] feared the stroke,
And trembled at the coming storm
When o'er their heads his thunder broke.

Foul slander now will sheath its barb,
And envy hush her poisoned tongue,
While virtue claims her cherished ward
Whose praises countless thousands sung.

1. Wise and Scilly were contemporaries of Mr. Adams in Congress. The sudden death of Lord Chatham and Mr. Adams on the scene of their many triumphs, was considered at the time, and will long remain so, a remarkable coincidence of the abrupt termination of the career of two of the most illustrious statesmen of their respective countries.

No pomp shall mark his funeral train,
  No martial sounds disturb his rest;
Peace was his field on Earth's domain,
  His home the mansion of the blest.

He sleeps in peace with all mankind,
  Beloved by freeman and by slave;
Fame an immortal wreath hath twined
  And laid it on the statesman's grave.

EPITAPH.

If thou art righteous, onward speed thy way;
If sinner thou—then pause, and kneel, and pray.

THE RICH MAN'S FUNERAL.

1846

The sable hearse and stately coaches rolled,
  A measured train amid the gazing crowd,
The clergy prayed, and muffled bells were tolled,
  And hireling mourners spent their grief aloud.

To give a solemn aspect to the scene,
  The miser's selfish gains were freely spent,
Filched from the honest poor as oft they'd been,
  In shape of usury and extorted rent.

There ostentation played its wonted part,
As listless lay, upon the stately bier,
The hand that never soothed an aching heart,
Nor ever dried the sorrowing widows tear.

THE EPITAPH.

Here wealth and avarice in corruption lie,
Fit emblem of the man and what he's been,
But yet the harmless stone proclaims a lie,
Recording virtues which were never seen.

ODE TO COLUMBIA

INSCRIBED AND PRESENTED

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT,

On the occasion of his receiving his countrymen in Paris,

November 26th, 1861.

Columbia, alas! how thy prestige is falling,
Since thy children have proved so unfaithful to thee;
The graves of whose fathers' past triumphs recalling,
Whose lives were the ransom that thou should'st be free.

Where the rose and the myrtle were yesterday blooming,
And rich harvest sheaves lying thick on the floor,
Nought is heard now but the cannon's deep booming,
And sorrow sits wailing at each cottage door.

The dread blast of war o'er thy mountains is sweeping;
And mothers made childless are telling sad tales;
The bride walks in mourning, and orphans are weeping,
And the shadow of death has darkened thy vales.

O'er thy far-spreading valleys, with plenty once beaming,
Where the ripe waving corn once saluted the mill,
Now around the lone dwelling the vulture is screaming;
The ploughshare lies rusting, the anvil is still.

Oh! where are the sages who founded thy glory,
Who erected thy altars 'mid carnage and flame?
Oh! who would thus stoop to relate the sad story
Of thy rupture and ruin, and father thy shame?

Look up at her banner, now drooping and smitten,
And think of its trials and glories of yore!
Then say, brothers, say, can it ever be written,
That you've sullied the flag which our Washington bore!

Then stand by the Union, and ne'er let it sever,
For its ruin, remember, your foemen play high;
The stake is for liberty, or slavery[1] ever,
And freedom waits trembling the turn of the die.

1. The word slavery, as used here, applies to the question of universal freedom and the well-being of mankind.

THE GAME OF LIFE.

1845

As chessmen set our life begins,
On all our acts some fate attends,
On every move the stake depends,
Who rightly plays most surely wins.

REMORSE.

Remorse once seated in the breast,
And disappointment following nigh,
Experience proves that all at best
Is but a phantom to the eye:

When hopes decline, and age steals on,
Ambition leaves its wonted sphere,
How sad to think of days by-gone,
How little's left to cherish here.

TO THE WOULD-BE AUTHOR.

Published. 1845.

If thou would'st fain be thought a sage
  Think a volume, write a page,
And from every page of thine,
  Publish but a single line.

THE HYPOCHONDRIAC.

Come worthy friend sit down with me,
And let us hold a converse free,
You always look so sour and sad;
Cheer up, my boy, let us be glad,
Arouse thyself, dispel this dream,
Take things that are, not things that seem.

The sun sinks 'neath the western skies,
We know to-morrow it will rise,
And, be the morning e'er so bright,
We also know there will be night.
Though life to thee may seem a curse,
Things may go bad, they might go worse.
If each one felt a brother's pain,

And worked for love instead of gain,
How soon all wrangling wars would cease,
How all would move along in peace;
Each one would clasp his neighbour's hand,
And smiles would beam throughout the land.
If want or vice should one ensnare,
Others his sorrow soon would share.
Discarding "ifs" let's up and try
Happy to be, or else know why.

Some men are false and always were,
And women oft their frailties share,
But most by nature good and kind,
Bring choicest blessings to mankind.

It always was and will be so,
So let us take things as they go,
And murmur not if others be
More blessed in worldly things than we,
For rest assured all have their share

Of worldly pangs and worldly care.
Should ev'ry one his grief disclose,
And paint the measure of his woes,
Were every gnawing secret told,
Ah! what a tale then would unfold!
For all have something to conceal
And no one dares all truths reveal,
Each has something he desires,
While constant use the senses tires.

Some men are jealous of their fame,
Some will cringe to win a name,
And, failing what they strive to be,
Fall back on notoriety.
With all his cunning, all his pains,
A certain something still remains
To crown his bliss; do what he will
Man finds himself unhappy still,
With all his wealth and rank beside.
With endless train, a lovely bride,

With riches, health, and talent rare,
Yet happiness is wanting there.
And, in our daily walks, we see
Thousands from trouble seeming free,
All wretched as they well can be.
Some are bowed down by care and need,
With starving babes and wife to feed,
With thoughtful step they move along,
As though it were a funeral throng.
Many of want and cold have died,
Others are planning suicide,
Some are basking in high estate;
Little dreaming the pending fate
That waits to hurl them in the sea,
Where others stem adversity.
Some are sinking 'neath wounded pride,
Some a consuming love to hide.
Many have thrown their charms away,
While kindred mourn for those who stray.
Some have lost their earthly store,

Others are mad in search of more:
The miser still will wretched be
In fear of want and misery.
Some a guilty conscience fly,
Dreading to live, afraid to die!
Many are slaves to pride and scorn,
Thinking all others basely born,
Unless they boast ancestral birth
Of high estate as lords of earth.
Most on whom e'er fortune smiled
Mourn husband, parent, wife or child;
And many, too, have lost a throne,
All hope and pride of prestige gone.
E'en the child who mislays his toy
Feels he has lost all hope of joy.
However high, however low,
Each one his ills must undergo,
However great, however small,
The same mishaps await them all.

Such is this world, my friend, you see,
From pain and sorrow none are free,
Of good and evil life is made,
Each hath its light, and each its shade.

These are facts for man to weigh,
For all things to our senses say,
If here on earth we think to gain
A perfect bliss, we think in vain.
Then let this maxim be thine own,
Know what is well, leave well alone.

Of all our ills the simple cause
Is found in breaking nature's laws;
All would have been a paradise,
Had not our parents tasted vice.
See how the herds contented lie
With nought to shield them but the sky.
And see the blossoms smile in spring;
Hear how the birds among them sing,

And hear the insect's chirp at e'en,
When nature dons her robe of green;
And see the glowing fields of grain,
How gay they smile 'neath sun and rain,
And wave a greeting to the trees,
Which in return expand their leaves,
And smile upon the golden sheaves,
Which God provides in time of need,
His helpless children all to feed.
And Providence, whate'er it be,
Is ever perfect harmony.
Earth, sun, and stars, in concert move,
All things in nature strictly prove
Perfection of their Maker's plan,
And put to shame ungrateful man.

WHO ARE THE WISE?

1845

Weigh all the wisdom of reputed fools,
Against the follies of the wise,
'Twill take the learned of all the schools,
To say with which true wisdom lies.

THE STORM.

1846

See yon tempestuous cloud in solemn grandeur rise,
And fold its sombre mantle around the azure skies,
Hear how the moaning tempest comes howling o'er the dèep,
Mark how the vivid lightnings across the mountains leap.
The distant thunder rolling deep foretells the coming storm,
And whirlwinds sweeping o'er the main spread far the wild alarm,
Uprooting lofty forest trees, and hurling to and fro
Oaks that defied the elements a hundred years ago.
See how the wary mariner is reefing in the sail

Amid the tumult of the storm, the pelting of the hail;
And oh! see how yon gallant bark is riding on the
strand,
By valiant hearts and hardy tars see how the yards
are manned,
The hull fast sinking 'neath the waves, and how the
yielding masts
Snap one by one as winter reeds are shivered by the
blast.
Their cry for succour in distress is buried in the gale,
And nought is heard to cheer the scene except the
sea-mew's wail,
The rain in torrents pouring the mountain stream
fills high.
But look o'er yon horizon, for the sun illumes the
sky,
And now the troubled ocean sinks gently down to
rest,
While many a grateful spirit reposes on its
breast,

The bow has swept its magic arch across the Eastern
world,
And proudly rides the gallant ship, with flags and
sails unfurled:
The elements are calm again, the sailor's heart beats
free,
And gaily sings he once again, of Life upon the sea.

AIM HIGH, STILL HIGHER.

1850

The man who strives to reach the Sun
  Although he strives in vain,
Will higher rise, by far, than one
  Who travels on the plain.

THE PRINTING OFFICE.

Down some dark and loathsome alley
  There the printer plies his trade,
With the devil keeping tally
  Where e'en monarchs seek his aid.
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  Thus the rollers seem to say,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  Goes the engine night and day.

Printer sets the pages and border,
Prepares the press, also the ink,
Then beds his form in order,
And starts the engine with a clink,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
Plain the rollers seem to say,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
Goes the engine night and day.

Poets, punsters, over heady
Straightway to the printers go,
All to serve the devil's ready,
Be he friend or be he foe.
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
Thus the devil seems to say,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
Goes the engine night and day.

Parsons, statesmen, all are running
  To the printer's dirty den,
To conceal or show their cunning,
  By the powers of their pen.
Night and day the press repeating
  Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
To this measure ever beating,
  Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle.

At each turn the virgin pages,
  Fly like snow flakes off the wheel,
Some for days and some for ages,
  Truth or falsehood to reveal.
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  Thus the rollers seem to say,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  Goes the engine night and day.

Busy engine, busy devil,
  Busy author, busy printer,
Instruments for good or evil,
  Be it spring time, be it winter,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  Night and day the press repeating,
Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle, chuckle,
  To this measure ever beating.

MASSA GONE TO WAR.

Oh! Massa gone to war,
Hard times comin,
Nigger he go dar,
For to do de drummin.

Nigger clean de shoat [1],
Nigger pick de chickin.
Nigger cotton toat [2],
Den he git de lickin.
Cos Massa gone to war,
Hard times comin,
Nigger burn de tar,
Nigger do de drummin.

1. A pig. 2. To carry.

Massa gone to war,
  Hard times comin,
Nigger save de tar,
  Nigger do de drummin.

White folk eat de shoat,
  De hoe cake and de muffin,
Wear de cotton coat,
  Gib [1] de nigger nuffin [2].
Cos Massa gone to war,
  Hard times comin,
Nigger cuss de tar,
  Nigger do de runnin.

1. Give. 2. Nothing.

THE TWO ROSES.

As two moss roses were reclining
Upon their richly curtained bed,
With arms around each other twining,
The elder to the younger said:—
"Oh, dear! I think some wicked Zephyr
Hath stolen away my sweetest leaves."
"Does that surprise you?" said the other,
"Zephyrs, you know, were ever thieves!"

I, too, while bathing when you missed me,
Making my toilette yesterday,
Was by a sunbeam caught, who kissed me,
And snatched my brightest pearls away.
Your wooer sighed, and mine caressed,
You lost your leaves, and I my pearls;
Now both, of honors dispossessed,
Must pine like two forsaken girls.

THE LABOURER AND HIS HIRE.

Money in bags for the fool,
Genius in rags for his tool,
Fortune e'er favours the knave,
Honesty serves as its slave.

THE INGOT LIES 'NEATH THE DROSS.

Oh! judge not a woman by outward attractions,
  However seductive or winning her ways,
We value the gem for its brilliant refraction,
  But a mite on its tablet will sully its rays.
Standard gold of the finest and purest extraction,
  When molten, sinks deepest beneath the fierce blaze,
And the bright crested ocean may charm to distraction,
  But the pearls in its bosom lie hid from the gaze.
So to test a man's worth you must look at his actions,
  Discarding his writings and all that he says,
For words are oft spoken that soon need retraction,
  And much that is written is done in self-praise.

THE HARMLESS.

He deemed it a rare merit to wear massive golden
chains,
To avoid appearing vulgar he made but slight display
of brains;
But upon his foremost finger a crested ring he bore;
Though truthfully was innocent of every kind of lore,
Books richly bound by thousands on costly shelves
arrayed,
Their rich contents he knew not and had never yet
assayed;
But when it came to dining and rare wines were there
to quaff,

He was eloquent on turtle and was sound upon a
laugh;
His equipages, mansions, and his plate were there
galore,
But he knew not, nor could ever see, HOW TWO AND
TWO MADE FOUR.

EVER CAUTIOUS.

A wise man notes,
And he indites;
He sometimes quotes,
But seldom writes.

THE CRITIC.

A rat may mine the stoutest wall,
And cause the noblest structure's fall:
The Critic, too, in envious spite,
Would spoil a work a saint may write.

MY COUNTRY.

"And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped."—REVELATIONS. XIV. 16.

A cloud loometh dark in the bright western sky;
Like a multitude weeping the hollow winds sigh,
The cloud is all glowing with sulphurous glare,
The voices we hear are the cries of despair,
And the clarion of war is heard high on the blast,
As the listening nations stand stricken aghast.

With talons blood stained on the mountain's steep crest,
An eagle is screaming and rending her breast;
And the Angel of Death in a fold of the cloud,

A winding sheet weaves for a national shroud;
The cloud slow unfolds like a funeral pall,
While the belfries of Heaven the senses appal,
As peals the deep thunder with iron-tongued bell
Sad Requiem, tolling a Nation's last knell.

The surge of the battle, the ring of the spear,
The groans of the dying fall sad on the ear,
The harpies of discord, with jubilant glee,
Rejoice at the sorrow and carnage they see,
As brothers 'gainst brothers whole catacombs fill,
While the contest grows fiercer! more desperate still!
Till the dead lie in windrows, like newly-mown hay,
And Liberty sorrowing turns weeping away.
Hope lingering near her, scans Heaven's wide space,
And a light like the rainbow now g'addens her face,
For she kens far in Ether the Angel of Peace,
Her signals displayed for the slaughter to cease.
Her trophies, the distaff, the sickle and sheaf,
The olive branch foremost in modest relief.

Her countenance glowing with heavenly smile,
As she holds forth the offering ever the while,
And points to the harvest all ripe in the field
The yellow maize wasting its bountiful yield.
Her banner bright flashing, in letters of light,
Union, Prosperity, Freedom, and Right.
The reverse has two serpents, each coiled in a ring,
The one at the o her preparing to spring;
And near stands a figure in mourning attire;
While beside her lies shattered Columbia's lyre.

THE LAST PRAYER.

When I this burning orb shall see
  In seething ocean ebb,
And then behold what is to be,
  When all is mute and dead;

And listen to the thunder's roll,
  And see the lightning's flash
Around the earth's vibrating pole,
  When time the spheres shall crash,

And watch the lessening orb of day,
  As nature's fires consume,
And see the planets melt away,
  Which heavens' grand dome illume;

And hear the dreadful trumpet's peal,
  Whose blast shall ope the graves,
And see the saints all trembling kneel
  Upon the fiery waves,

When all celestial bodies wane,
  And chaos I behold,
That takes its everlasting reign,
  When nature's tale is told.

Oh! wilt Thou then Thy servant spare
  From that profound abyss;
Oh! Father, then, Thy mercies share,
  And grant eternal bliss?

And may he also hope to see
  The gathering of the host,
Thy throne around, Almighty! Thee,
  The Son, and Holy Ghost!

MORNING IN MY NATIVE LAND.

The night birds cease their dismal cry
As coming sun-beams streak the sky:
With dripping dew and hum of bee
A twitter bursts from every tree;
Now swells the early matin strain,
As bows the grass and waves the grain;
The flowers lift their heads the while,
And greet the Zephyrs with a smile.

In distant wood, at break of day,
The pheasant drums the gay reveil;
Where cedars tall and graceful wave,

And winding brooks the pebbles lave.
The timid plover in the vale,
Responsive whistles with the quail;
With artful cry, in search of prey,
The stealthy falcon speeds his way;
While, perched upon some lonely oak,
The raven joins in solemn croak,
Watching the jay and noisy crow,
From field to wood alternate go;
And listening, as the tender dove
Pours forth her plaintive lays of love.

Anon the cuckoo's tell-tale note
From hill to hill is heard to float;
The wood-robin and boblink nigh
Take up the joyous matin cry,
As springs the lark from off its nest,
Calling the reaper from his rest,
And warbling, as he mounts the skies,
His gushing liquid melodies.

With thousand hues, the humming bird,
Whose notes like fairy lutes are heard,
Sways, censer-like, 'twixt bush and bower,
Sipping the nectar from each flower:
Then like an arrow takes his flight,
And quick as thought is out of sight.
The golden finch with gorgeous wing,
And merry thrush their carols sing;
The red breast, blue bird, and the wren,
Their trios chant in every glen;
But loud and clear, above the throng,
The mocking bird, the lord of song,
Trills solos high the leaves among;
Like blossoms falling from the trees,
His quavers tremble on the breeze.
In distance lend their swelling note
The lowing kine with trumpet throat,
As though it were some brazen horn
Breaking the slumbers of the morn.
The bleating sheep, the grumbling swine,

The neighing horse, the house dog's whine,
And garrulous poultry of the farm,
In chorus lend a homelier charm.
While, 'neath the old mill's mossy wheel,
The plunging waters foam and reel.
And cascades with the gurgling rill
The measure of the concert fill.
This is the song and this the tune
That cheers my home in sunny June.

TO ——,

With this Book.

'Neath weight of years with vision dim,
  Life's shadows pointing to the grave,
When death draws nigh with visage grim,
  Then kindly think of him who gave,

This reminiscence of the past,
  When pleasure's cup o'erflowed the brim
Of days too happy long to last,
  Then think, oh, think again of him!

TO A QUAKER FRIEND,

With this Book.

Kind friend, if thou art in the mood
To read a rhyme or anecdote,
Then of its merits make a note,
If here thou findest aught that's good.

PARIS OUT OF DOORS.

Paris, Paris, ever charming,
In thy streets for ever swarming,
Crowds of gay and happy creatures,
With a smile across their features,
Busy voitures constant humming;
Always going, always coming,
From the Madeleine to Bastille,
Some to dinner, then Mabille;
Bells for mass ring till eleven,
Bands of music play at seven;
Gendarmes to and fro are marching;
Washerwomen linen starching,

Modistes ever up and thriving,
Busy all as bees at hiving ;
Parks and lakes with wild game teeming,
Beaux and belles with pleasure beaming ;
On boulevards and Champs-Élysées
Promenade the free and easy.
Punch and Judy, Cafés Chantants,
Teams of goats and children rampant;
Organ-grinders, grinning monkeys,
Men in gateways milking donkeys;
Colleges in Latin Quarter,
Students thrive across the water,
Where the gentle Seine is flowing;
How long since there is no knowing.
Bourse goes down while rents are rising,
How they vary 'tis surprising;
Bankers, brokers' bills discounting,
Money shavers profits counting;
Ruined men by speculation
In the Seine seek consolation.

Restaurants, with fare delightful,
But the prices, oh! how frightful;
You may dine, though if you 're willing,
From ten pounds down to one shilling.
Fêtes for every week in the year,
Sometimes oftener do appear;
At Christmas booths like magic rise,
For sale of toys and merchandise
Of every shape and every rig,
From a telescope to a pig.
New year's day then every man
Is kissing every maid he can,
Cook or bonne, where'er they meet,
At the market or in the street.
Then Mardi-Gras with cavalcade,
The carnival and masearade.
Easter bringing eggs and flowers,
Rich bonbons and candy towers.
And with Sunday come the races,
Coach-and-four and golden laces,

Gay postilion's whips are cracking,
Cabby, too, his nag is whacking;
High in air balloons are floating;
On the river boys are boa'ing;
At Versailles grand waters playing;
All the world seems out a-Maying.

THE SCEPTIC.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

ST. JOHN, 1st chap., 1st verse.

Who tints the gorgeous rainbow?
Who sends the genial shower?
Who bids the Ocean ebb and flow?
Who paints each little flower?

Who made the tiny insect's wing;
To weave the spider taught?
Who prompts the merry bird to sing,
And who the sunbeam wrought?

Who gilds the glowing east and west,
And gives the lightning speed?
Who guides the seafowl to her nest,
Her helpless young to feed?

*

Who sends the whirlwind to and fro?
Who carved the mountain peak?
Who bade the seasons come and go?
Who makes the thunder speak?

The wonders all that still unfold,
Whose beauties here I see;
The myriad wonders yet untold—
Mysterious all to me.

And worlds on worlds that constant roll,
In ether seem to swim;
Teach me their Author, Oh! my soul,
And lead me unto Him.

I'm told that God created e'en
The worm that cleaves the sod;
And all that is or e'er hath been,
But who created God!!!

But what confusing sounds I hear,
  Emotions strange I feel,
My spirit shrinks with dread and fear,
  My inmost senses reel!

Sounds fearful and condemning say,
  How dared to ask thou hast?
The same who tuned the insect's lay,
  Now thunders in the blast—

"I am Alpha and Omega,"
  The Present and the Past,
The one, the sole Almighty Jah,
  The Great First Cause and Last!

The "WORD" that bade the night dissolve,
  The sun at morn appear—
The spheres around His hand revolve,
  To mark the rolling year.

'Twas He who caused the waters' flow,
The quick'ning of the seed;
Across the heavens swept the bow,
And bade the floods recede.

He fixed the planets in the skies,
And laid the Solar plan;
His hand created Paradise,
And gave it unto Man.

There bade him rest from sorrow free,
Enjoy all he beheld,
Abstain from one forbidden tree,
But ingrate man rebelled;

And sought to be as wise as He
Who rules o'er Heav'n and Hell;
And ate of the forbidden tree,
And then and thus he fell!

A COAST SCENE.

Lo! the rain in torrents dashes!
  Foaming floods rush past each knoll;
And with fearful lightning flashes,
  Deafening peals of thunder roll!

Loud the sea begins complaining,
  Dismally the breakers roar!
Mastless barks with timbers straining,
  Helpless reel toward the shore!

Fierce the flinty hail comes rattling,
  And the wild winds shriek again;
See with death the ship's crew battling!
  How the tempest sweeps the main!

Wild the spray in columns flying,
High o'er rocks and seething foam
While the sailor struggling, dying,
Prays for wife and babes at home.

Now the wreathing, bounding billow,
Like some sea-god lifts its form;
Stalwart oaks and yielding willow
Prostrate lie beneath the storm!

Still the waves are upward forming,
As each low'ring cloud expands;
Till Old Neptune and the Storm-king,
Seem together joining hands.

THE MONARCH AND THE BEGGAR.

A monarch and a beggar once wandered side by side,
And mutually complained that their wants were unsupplied.
The beggar craved a pittance wherewith to buy him bread;
The monarch had no appetite, and cares deranged his head.
The beggar prayed for raiment to shield him from the cold;
The monarch wanted continents, more power and more gold.
The beggar craved a pallet, where he might rest and weep;
The king had downy couches, but would give the world for sleep.
The beggar asked but comfort — he little cared for wealth;
The king had boundless riches, but would give them all for health.

The beggar craved a hovel, for the night winds pinched
him sore;
The king had many palaces, but always wanted
more.
The beggar plied his crutches, his palsied limbs to
aid;
The king surveyed his palfreys that in his stables
neighed.
"I faint," exclaimed the beggar, "from fasting day
and night:"
The king deemed feasting tiresome; of food he loathed
the sight.
The beggar craved one friend sincere in this his hour
of need;
The monarch had ten thousand friends, but not one
friend *indeed*.
The beggar slept upon the ground, his pillow was a
stone,
He sometimes went without a meal, oft-times his feast
a bone;
The monarch wondered how it was all night he lay
awake;
He sometimes thought his wines were bad that caused
his head to ache.

The beggar eyed his patches as he shivered 'neath the
blast;
The monarch closer wrapped his furs, for snow fell
thick and fast.
The beggar through a window peep'd where fires
were burning bright;
He cried "How happy must they be who slumber
there at night;"
Says the king "This is my palace, with the comforts
there you see,
"It's as chilly and as cheerless as is possible to me."
Then the beggar sought some shelter where he might
meekly die,
He also asked forgiveness from Him who rules on
high;
The monarch asked for monuments, built high above
his grave,
But thought not of his craving soul, or Grace that
soul to save.

THE SILVER WEDDING.

A score and five of wedded years
  Have run their chequered sand,
Since I placed the marriage ring
  Upon a maiden's hand;

And we vowed unto each other,
  On that eventful day,
To walk together lovingly
  Through life's uncertain way.

With conscience as her Mentor,
  And honesty of heart,
That vow she has most sacred kept,
  Most nobly filled her part.

In sickness and in sorrow,
  In happiness and health ;
When evils sore assailed us,
  Without a sigh for wealth,

She tighter drew the cords of love,
  When storms were seen to low'r,
As 'neath her wing the dove collects
  Her young ere bursts the show'r.

Like the constant needle trembling
  Toward the Polar star,
Throbbed anxiously her heart for me
  When I was lone and far ;

Far from kindred and from country, —
  Strange, in a stranger's land,
With no counsellor to guide me,
  Save One protecting hand.

When midnight lamps were burning dim,
  Oft on the bended knee,
She prayed the succour of That hand,
  From harm to shelter me.

If aught hath moved discordant
  Around the household shrine;
If faults have been, as doubtless were,
  Those faults perhaps were mine.

With conscience still her Mentor,
  With truthfulness of heart,
She holds that vow still sacred,
  Still nobly fills her part.

Fill then each and all your glasses,
  Aye! let them flow the brim;
And pledge all happiness to her,
  And have a thought for him,

Who hopes again to meet you,
  When time at least shall score
Some twenty-five or thirty years,
  Or even fifty more.

EVENING.

Lulled by the stream that gurgling flows,
The drowsy herd sinks to repose ;
Both bird and insect seem to say,
How lovely is the close of day.

When Earth her bounteous harvest yields,
And twilight glimmers o'er the fields ;
Of ripening grain and fragrant hay,
How lovely is the close of day.

When Autumn's sear is on the leaf,
The cattle housed and stored the sheaf,
The plough and sickle laid away,
Contentment smiles at close of day.

When gathering storms the skies o'ercast,
And winter rides upon the blast;
At e'en when children romp and play,
How sweet is home at close of day.

When light and darkness seem to meet,
With whispers soft and accents sweet
The weary Christian too will say,
How lovely is the close of day.

DELUSION.

We madly follow pleasure,
  The phantom of a day;
We dance to folly's measure,
  While with remorse we pay.

We flatter those above us,
  Their frailties imitate;
Neglecting friends who love us,—
  To fawn on those we hate.

Each has his beau-ideal,
  And each deplores his lot;
We overlook the real,
  In search of what is not

Henry A. Clausen

We hear the voice of reason,
  Resolve and hesitate;
Defer then for a season,
  And heed it when too late.

While happiness pursuing,
  O'er land and sea we roam;
The Goddess thus we're wooing,
  Is waiting us at home.

Still counting on the morrow
  We reach the end at last;
Then worlds would give to borrow
  One moment from the past.

POSTSCRIPT.

Some for the fame of the poet burning,
  Thinking their wit supremely terse,
Have the unhappy knack of turning
  The meanest prose into meaner verse.

FINIS.